

Attorney Docket # 4925-55

Serial No. 09/753,844

Amndt. dated April 27, 2005

Reply to Final Rejection dated January 27, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Final Rejection mailed January 27, 2005 has been reviewed and carefully considered. Claims 1-5 and 14-24 are pending (Claims 6-13 having been withdrawn in response to the Restriction Requirement of January 15, 2004). In the present Amendment, the limitations of dependent Claims 2 and 4 have been incorporated into independent Claims 1 and 3, respectively, as well as independent Claim 14, and dependent Claims 2 and 4 are being canceled without prejudice, while independent Claim 19 is being amended to clarify the invention claimed therein. Thus, after entry of the present Amendment, Claims 1, 3, 5, and 14-24 will be pending.

In the January 27, 2005 Final Rejection, Claims 1-4, 14-15, and 19-23 were rejected as anticipated under 35 USC §102(e) by *Lynn* (US 6,595,859), and Claim 5 was rejected as unpatentable under 35 USC §103(a) by *Lynn* in view of *Reilly* (US 6,580,422). In response, independent Claims 1, 3, and 14 are being amended to incorporate the limitations recited in each of dependent Claims 2 and 4, which are being cancelled. It is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 3, and 14, as amended, are not anticipated by *Lynn* for at least the following reasons.

Lynn is directed to an "Internet marketing method and game" in which a user may "point and click" at any individual pixel within a game image to discover whether the selected pixel corresponds to a "winning" pixel, thereby entitling the user to a prize (see Abstract). For example, a company's website may have a web page with an image of a tree, such as the webpage shown in FIG. 3 of *Lynn*. The user would click various pixels within the image of the tree to try to "find" bills for \$1000, \$250, \$100, and \$20 hidden within (see FIG. 3 and col. 5, lines 16-30). While the user is playing, advertisements will be shown on the screen (outside of the tree image).

By contrast, the invention claimed in amended independent Claims 1, 3, and 14 of the present application is directed to a system and/or method in which individual pixels shown on a display are obscured and/or blocked from the user's view, without any input from the user. For each of the pixels shown on the display, there is pixel data comprising both content and metadata. The metadata comprises a value which classifies the pixel independently from the other pixels in the image. If the metadata value of a particular pixel exceeds a discretionary threshold value, that

Attorney Docket # 4925-55

Serial No. 09/753,844

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particular pixel is obscured and/or blocked from the user's view. This discretionary threshold value is set before the user views the image having the pixels. Through these means, portions of an image that are undesirable, objectionable, offensive, etc., can be obscured and/or blocked from the user's view. An example of this is shown in FIG. 5D of the present application, where an image of a nude woman 320 is blocked from view in an image while the remaining portions of the image are visible. In FIG. 5D, the metadata of each pixel which forms part of the image of the nude woman has a metadata value greater than the discretionary threshold value, and, thus, is blocked from view. One benefit of this system/method is the ability to censor material which a child might see on the Internet.

Lynn neither teaches nor discloses using metadata values associated with each pixel in an image in order to block and/or obscure portions of the image if the metadata value of the pixels comprising those particular portions exceed a discretionary threshold value. Because amended Claims 1, 3, and 14 of the present application recite such limitations, amended independent Claims 1 and 3 are patentable over *Lynn*. At least on this basis, withdrawal of the rejection of amended independent Claims 1, 3, and 14 (and Claims 5 and 15-18 depending therefrom) is respectfully requested.

As stated above, *Lynn* neither teaches nor suggests a system or method by which undesirable images within a screen display can be deleted or blurred out. Put more broadly, *Lynn* does not teach, suggest, or even hint at a system and method where particular portions in a screen display can be manipulated separately from the remaining portions of the screen display by the signal processor which processes the raw image data to create the screen display based on how the individual pixels of the particular portions are classified in their metadata.

By contrast, the invention claimed in independent Claim 19 of the present application is directed to a system in which a processing means receives and processes a data frame which represents the contents of an image or a portion of an image. Within the data frame, each pixel of the image has pixel data, which comprises both content and metadata. The metadata comprises a value which classifies the pixel independently from the pixels in the image. Thus, using metadata, all of the pixels which form a visual object, such as the nude woman example above, can be identified by the processing means without performing any analysis of the content. By these means,

Attorney Docket # 4925-55

Serial No. **09/753,844**

Amtd. dated April 27, 2005

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the processing means of Claim 19 can automatically perform operations on categories of visual objects based on their individual classification (as shown by their metadata). The example given above was that visual objects that are undesirable or objectionable, such nudity or violence, can be deleted from the final displayed image, or blurred out. As another example, if the visual object is "an advertisement", the processing means can identify and meter the visual object "to determine the total display space [it occupies] and length of time [it is displayed]" to a viewer (Abstract).

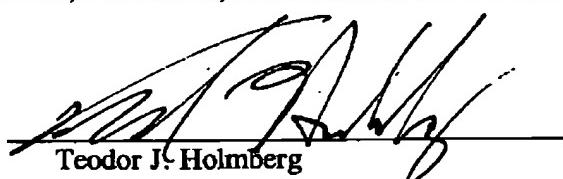
The differences between the invention in amended Claim 19 and *Lynn* can be put very simply: *Lynn* does not teach, suggest, or even hint at a processing means which can automatically perform operations (i.e., with no user interaction) on particular visual objects in a screen image separately from the remaining portions of the screen display. At least on this basis, the withdrawal of the rejection of independent Claim 19 (and Claims 20-24 depending therefrom) is respectfully requested.

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, allowance of all presently pending claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: April 27, 2005